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FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK

CURRENT EVENTS

THE REORGANIZATION PLAN FOR THE ENGLISH ARMY NURSING SERVICE

A MOST important event is the announcement of the reformation and extension of the British Army Nursing Service, as published in the report of the Committee on Reorganization, and found in the English press and medical and nursing journals. Readers of the daily papers for the last two years are well aware of the criticisms made upon the bad management and lack of foresight shown in the care of the sick in South Africa, the usual army nursing staff being quite inadequate for the service in a rush of emergencies. It was too small, and too limited in its general construction. It may be said not to have been a department at all, but simply one of the subdivisions of the Medical Department. There were times when, as a prominent English woman said, all the lessons taught by Florence Nightingale seemed to have been forgotten.

Now, under the new plan, a new department is created,—a Department of Nursing,—and planned on a larger scale, with a nurse at the head, and with powers and functions which really give her a position more like that of one of our heads of departments in the federal government than anything else.

It is a most gratifying advance in recognition of the nursing profession and nurses' work as such, and is also a victory for the whole cause of woman's right to participate in affairs of public good with her brains as well as with her heart —as a co-worker with man and not solely as his hand-maid.

Our army nursing service in America is now left far behind, let us hope only temporarily. We rightly felt there had been a great advance made when a nurse was placed at the head of the Army Nurse Corps, yet it was but the first step. The necessary extension of her authority and supervisory powers, and the settling of the whole question of "status" in the army for assistant nurses will be seen to be as yet unattended to when comparison is made with the new English plan, from which we take extracts as follows:

TITLE.

"1. There shall be one Military Nursing Service for His Majesty's Army in the United Kingdom, India, and the Colonies, to be designated 'Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service' (Q.A.I.M.N.S.). In this service shall be amalgamated the existing Army Nursing Service and the Indian Nursing Service.

"PRESIDENT.

"2. Her Majesty Queen Alexandra shall be requested graciously to assume the presidency of this service.

"CONSTITUTION OF NURSING BOARD.

"3. The Nursing Service shall be under the immediate control of Her Majesty Queen Alexandra as president, and of a Nursing Board constituted as follows:

"*President.*—Her Majesty Queen Alexandra.

"*Chairman.*—The Director-General, Army Medical Service, or an officer nominated by him.

"Two members of the Advisory Board, Army Medical Service, of whom one shall be a civilian.

"The matron-in-chief, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service.

"Three matrons of large civil hospitals with medical schools.

"One representative of the India Office to be appointed by the Secretary of State for India.

"Two members to be nominated by Her Majesty the president, and holding office for three years.

"MODE AND TERM OF APPOINTMENT OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE NURSING BOARD.

"4. Upon this Nursing Board the civilian members of the Advisory Board, Army Medical Service, and the matrons of civil hospitals shall be appointed by the Crown, on the advice of the Secretary of State, and shall hold office for a period of three years, renewable on expiration of the term of appointment.

"A matron of a civil hospital shall receive an honorarium of twenty-six pounds five shillings per annum while serving on the board.

"5. The Nursing Board, of which three shall form a quorum, shall usually meet at fortnightly intervals. The minutes of the proceedings of the Nursing Board shall be laid by the matron-in-chief before the Advisory Board. It shall be in the power of the Advisory Board to refer back any point to the Nursing Board for reconsideration, and in case of a divergence of opinion between the boards the matter in question shall be referred to the Secretary of State.

"FUNCTIONS OF NURSING BOARD.

"6. Subject to the general control of the Advisory Board the Nursing Board shall be responsible for—

"(1) Advising the Secretary of State upon the strength of the nursing staff of various grades requisite in each military hospital (including the hospitals for women and children attached to military stations), having regard to the character of the cases admitted, and subject to the proviso that as a general rule hospitals containing fewer than one hundred beds will not be provided with a regular female nursing staff (*vide* paragraph 14).

"(2) Defining the conditions under which nurses may enter the service, the terms of their appointment, and the duties to be performed in the several grades of the Nursing Service.

"(3) Dealing with all questions relating to the uniform and clothing of the Nursing Service.

"(4) Receiving and considering reports from matron-in-chief and the matrons of the various hospitals.

"(5) Recommending to the Commander-in-Chief, for the approval of the Secretary of State, the appointment, retention, promotion, retirement, dismissal, and distribution of the members of the Nursing Service.

"(6) Arranging for the selection and engagement of additional nurses, the organization of the requisite nursing staff, and the appointment of principal matrons in case of war or epidemic.

"(7) Advising the Secretary of State upon the formation of the Nursing Reserve of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service.

"(8) Arranging for the periodical inspection of military hospitals as regards nursing efficiency.

"(9) Submitting to the Secretary of State, through the Advisory Board, a scheme for the organization and development in India of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, which shall allow for adequate local control, subject to the general authority of the Nursing Board.

"GRADES IN THE QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S IMPERIAL MILITARY NURSING SERVICE.

"7. The Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service shall consist of—

"(1) A matron-in-chief and principal matrons.

"(2) Matrons.

"(3) Sisters.

"(4) Nurses.

BADGE.

"8. All matrons, sisters, and nurses of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service shall be entitled to wear an appropriate badge which, by special permission only of Her Majesty the president, may be retained by the wearer after leaving the service.

THE MATRON-IN-CHIEF.

"9. The matron-in-chief shall have a seat on the Advisory Board, acting as a member of the board whenever matters concerning the Nursing Service are under discussion, and in her absence a principal matron shall take her duties.

"10. The matron-in-chief shall be the medium of communication between the Director-General and the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in all matters connected with that service.

"11. The matron-in-chief shall be responsible for keeping the service records and confidential reports from the matrons of the various hospitals regarding the character, conduct, and efficiency of the sisters and nurses under their control.

"12. The matron-in-chief shall keep herself acquainted with the administration of the nursing service in the various military hospitals.

"13. She shall submit to the Nursing Board recommendations for the appointment, promotion, retirement, dismissal, and distribution of members of the service.

"14. She shall be responsible for maintaining a sufficient staff of special nurses, detailing them for duty in cases of emergency, or for service in smaller hospitals.

"15. She shall present every year to the Nursing Board a scheme for the annual leave of matrons and special nurses, and shall report to the board the arrangements made by matrons for the annual leave of sisters and nurses.

"16. Among the duties of a matron, to be defined in detail by the Nursing Board, shall be the following:

"(1) To recommend suitable candidates for admission to the service in accordance with the prescribed regulations.

"(2) In conjunction with the medical officer in charge of the hospital to forward to the matron-in-chief such confidential reports with regard to the work and conduct of the nursing staff as may be required, and to make recommendations for retention, promotion, retirement, and dismissal.

"(3) To be responsible for the general nursing arrangements of the hospital, for the due performance of their duties by the sisters and nurses, and for the maintenance of good conduct, efficiency, and discipline among all members of the female nursing staff. In conjunction with the medical officer in charge of the hospital to report upon these matters at stated intervals to the Nursing Board through the matron-in-chief.

"(4) To exercise similar functions as regards the hospital for women and children in a station where such hospital exists.

"(5) In urgent cases to provide, where practicable, for the nursing of women and children on the married establishment.

"(6) To engage and dismiss the female servants appointed to attend upon the nursing staff, and to be responsible for their discipline, good conduct, and efficiency.

"(7) To undertake the daily inspection of the nurses' quarters to insure that they are clean, well ventilated, and kept in good order.

"(8) To be responsible to the medical officer in charge of the hospital for sufficient supply, good condition, and cleanliness of the bedding and linen in the nurses' quarters and the wards under her nursing charge.

"(9) To see that proper medical and nursing attendance is provided without delay for sick members of the nursing or female domestic staff.

"(10) To arrange the annual leave of sisters, nurses, and female domestic staff, reporting thereon to the matron-in-chief.

"17. A principal medical officer shall report annually to the Nursing Board through the general officer commanding upon the conduct and efficiency of the matrons of hospitals within his district.

"18. Among the duties of a sister in charge of a ward, to be defined in detail by the Nursing Board, shall be the following:

"(1) To be responsible for the cleanliness, ventilation, and good order of her ward and its annexes.

"(2) To attend the medical officers in their visits to the ward, and carefully to carry out their orders with regard to the diet and treatment of patients.

"(3) To see that the nurses and orderlies perform their duties punctually and efficiently, reporting any breach of discipline or

neglect of duty on the part of a nurse to the matron, and on the part of an orderly to the medical officer in charge of the ward, or in his absence to a warrant or non-commissioned officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

" (4) To take part in the nursing of all patients seriously ill.

" (5) To be responsible to the matron and medical officer of the ward for sufficient supply, good condition, and cleanliness of the bedding and linen, and for the personal cleanliness of the patients.

" 19. Among the conditions under which nurses may enter the service and the terms of their appointment (to be defined in detail by the Nursing Board) are the following:

" (1) A candidate must be of British parentage, be between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age, and possess a certificate of not less than three years' training and service in medical and surgical nursing in a civil hospital recognized by the Advisory Board. She shall be required to satisfy the Nursing Board that as regards education, character, and social status she is a fit person to be admitted to the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service.

" (2) If provisionally accepted, she shall be placed on probation for a period of three months, at the end of which time, if her work and conduct are reported to be satisfactory by the matron of the hospital, she may, after having been medically examined, enter into an agreement binding herself to three years' service in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, and undertaking to conform to the rules and regulations of the service. The agreement shall be dated from the time at which the nurse was provisionally accepted, and may, on the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief, be terminated at any time by three months' notice from the Secretary of State, or in case of grave breach of discipline or misconduct without notice.

" (3) On the expiration of her three years' term of service a nurse may be permitted—

" (*a*) To retire from the service.

" (*b*) To continue in the service as a staff nurse, with an agreement terminable at any time by one month's notice on either side.

" (*c*) To join the staff of special nurses under the orders of the matron-in-chief, with an agreement terminable at any time by one month's notice on either side.

" (*d*) To offer herself for promotion to the post of sister, undertaking to serve for at least one year, and afterwards under an agreement terminable at any time by one month's notice on either side.

" (*e*) To enter into a fresh agreement for service, as nurse or sister in India or elsewhere abroad, for a period of three or five years, according to climate.

"CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE ARMY AND INDIAN NURSING SERVICE, AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMY NURSING RESERVE.

"20. All present members of the Army and Indian Nursing Service, and members of the Army Nursing Reserve who have been in military employment during the war in South Africa, shall be eligible for appointment in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, if recommended by the Nursing Board. Should any question arise as to their status in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service, the Nursing Board shall report thereon to the Advisory Board, and the recommendation of the Advisory Board shall be submitted to the Commander-in-Chief, whose decision shall be final.

"21. Any present member of the existing services who is not retained in the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service may be recommended for a gratuity of one month's pay for each year of service if she is not entitled to a pension; and any member who may decline to accept the new terms of employment shall be allowed to serve upon the terms of her present engagement.

"22. PAY.

"(*a*) *Nursing Staff*—

"Matron-in-chief, two hundred and fifty pounds a year, rising by annual increments of ten pounds to three hundred pounds, and lodging allowance.

"Principal matron in India, two hundred and thirty pounds a year, rising by annual increments of ten pounds to two hundred and eighty pounds, and lodging allowance.

"Principal matrons, one hundred and ten pounds a year, rising by annual increments of five pounds to one hundred and sixty pounds.

"Matrons, according to size of hospital, seventy to one hundred pounds a year, rising by annual increments of five pounds to one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty pounds.

"Sisters, thirty-seven pounds ten shillings a year, rising by annual increments of two pounds ten shillings to fifty pounds.

"Nurses, twenty-five pounds a year, rising by annual increments of two pounds ten shillings to thirty-five pounds.

"(*b*) *Female Servants*—

"Fifteen pounds a year, rising by annual increments of one pound to twenty pounds.

"23. ALLOWANCES.

"(*a*) *Nursing Staff*—

"Home station, board and washing, fifteen shillings a week.

"Station abroad, board and washing, twenty-one shillings a week.

"Station abroad, washing, three shillings six pence a week.

"Home station, uniform, six pounds per annum.

"Station abroad, uniform, seven pounds per annum.

"Home and abroad, cloaks, two pounds per annum.

"(*b*) *Female Servants*—

"Board and washing, ten shillings six pence a week.

"24. Allowances at the recognized scale shall be given for Indian and Colonial service.

"ANNUAL LEAVE.

"25. The regular annual leave of members of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in home stations shall be as follows: Matrons, six weeks; sisters, five weeks; nurses, four weeks. Leave at stations abroad shall be granted on the military system.

"PENSION.

"26. It is desirable that all members of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service should be eligible to apply for a pension at the age of fifty years, and should be retired at the age of fifty-five years. Rates of pension shall be according to the scale laid down in Article 1,233, Royal Warrant for Pay and Promotion.

"ST. JOHN BRODRICK,
"E. W. D. WARD,
"G. DE C. MORTON, Major-General,
"JAMES WILLCOCKS, Colonel,
"FREDERICK TREVES,
"WILLIAM THOMSON,
"W. R. HOOPER, Surgeon-General,
"G. H. MAKINS,
"HOWARD H. TOOTH,
"ALFRED D. FRIPP,
"ALFRED KEOGH, Lieut.-Colonel, R.A.M.C.,
"ALEX. OGSTON,
"E. C. PERRY.
"H. E. R. JAMES, Major, R.A.M.C.,
"Secretary."

As no doubt many reformers, both men and women, lay and professional, have aided in this movement towards a better nursing system for the English army, it might be impossible to find one person or set of persons who should rightly have more than a part of the credit; yet as nurses we may at least justly pride ourselves on the fact that no one has been *more* active and insistent than English nurses through the Matrons' Council and the nursing magazines, and no one ever presented a *better* set of suggestions than those sent in petition to the War Office by the Matrons' Council,*—in fact, we remember nothing else so good, and we now have the satisfaction of seeing that their suggestions are mainly embodied in this report.

* See our English correspondent's letter in June number AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING.